

Bonchurch. A single Silver Y *Autographa gamma* (L.) was observed at Freshwater during the day on 18 February, after which colder weather set in and the migration finished. Dry cold weather with northerly winds and night frosts were a feature of the second half of the month and on the evening of 26 February about an inch (2.5 cms) of snow fell on the Island.

There were about a dozen records of the very rare immigrant Levant Blackneck *Tathorhynchus exsiccata* (Lederer) from Puddleton and Portland, Dorset from 11 to 13 February. Other migrants not mentioned so far which were recorded from Southern England were Udea ferrugalis (Hb.), the Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* (Linn.), the Gem *Orthonana obstipata* (Fabr.), Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica* (Esper), Pearly Underwing *Peridroma saucia* (Hb.), Nutmeg *Discestra trifolii* (Hufn.) and White-speck *Mythimna unipuncta* (Haw.).— SAM KNILL-JONES, 1 Moorside, MoonsHill, Totland, Isle of Wight P039 OHU.

Searches for the Bordered Gothic *Heliophobus reticulata* around Peterborough, 2001-2003

The Bordered Gothic is a moth that has recently declined to the point of virtual extinction in Great Britain (see Waring, 2002. *Atropos* **16**: 76-77, Dudley, 2003. *Atropos* **20**: 59 and Waring, Townsend & Lewington, 2003. *Field guide to the moths of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife Publishing). Up to the 1970s it was recorded from a wide scatter of sites in southern and eastern England, but after 1980 it was seldom reported away from Dorset and East Anglia (Waring, 2002. *Atropos* **16**: 76-77). It used to be found in the vicinity of Peterborough. For example it is on the moth list in Cook & Pilcher (1982. *The history of Borough Fen Decoy*. Providence, Ely) for the Borough Fen Duck Decoy (O.S. grid reference TF 200080) just 6 km north-east of Werrington, where I live. The larval foodplant and other ecological requirements of the moth are poorly understood, but most former localities are hot dry, open, well-drained sites, such as the breckland of East Anglia and the Isle of Portland, Dorset. Soapwort *Saponaria officinalis* appears to be the only reported foodplant, after which the moth was once named by Borkhausen (*saponariae* Borkhausen, 1792). I personally doubt the species feeds exclusively on Soapwort but Julian Clarke (pers. comm.) has said that a captive female he once had would only lay eggs on this plant, of those offered. Soapwort is large and conspicuous when in flower. It favours open, sunny places with thin soil. I saw it growing widely in southern France in August 2003, but around Peterborough I only know of one wild population, along a stretch of about 50m of grassy roadside verge near Helpston (TF 113027 to TF 113028), and two colonies of the double-flowered form which is a garden escape. I could not find any of the plant at Borough Fen Duck Decoy when I visited on 25 May 2002 but I must return in August when the plant is in flower and much more obvious before I can say there is none there. My impression of the Decoy is that it is now heavily overgrown with woody plants and that there are no really open, hot sites there. According to Cook and Pilcher (1982. *The history of Borough*

Fen Decoy), there was a major felling of trees at the Decoy in 1958, after which the area was fenced off, so there may well have been more open ground at that time and into the 1960s. Pilcher's records for the Bordered Gothic from the Decoy date from some when between 1961-1975 (BRC record card).

There are lots of other open sites to the east of Peterborough however, most obviously the many scattered brick-pits, many of which are now disused. I have found no Soapwort on visits to the disused and partially flooded Dogsthorpe Star Brick-pit on the outskirts of Eye nor at Eye Green Local Nature Reserve, which is also a disused brick-pit, but following my hunch that other food-plants are likely, I would not write off these sites as possible breeding areas.

I have never had the Bordered Gothic in my garden trap in Werrington where I have been light-trapping each year since 1991, nor have I ever seen it along the nearby railway line and associated rough ground which I have been surveying weekly by day from May to August since 2000 and with occasional visits previously since 1987.

I began searching specially for the Bordered Gothic around Peterborough in 2001. The first year I light-trapped all night beside Dogsthorpe brick-pit on 18 May and 28 June, which fall within the reported flight period. No Bordered Gothic were seen but the records of other species pleased our County Moth Recorder, John Ward. The site falls in the 10 km square TF 20 which includes the extreme eastern tip of vice county Northamptonshire, for which John has received virtually no moth records for 30 years. By contrast, over 400 species of macro-moths have been recorded in the adjacent 10 km square, in which I live (TF 10), as do at least three other moth recorders. In view of John's interest, I found a baby-sitter for a pair of Robinson light-traps, Bob Shirtcliffe, who lives in a rural location in TF 20 by the Carr Dyke and the brick-pit, at Hodney Road, Eye (TF 216030). I dropped the traps off with Bob who ran them all night. I rolled up early the following morning and recorded the catches. I was also successful in attracting the day-flying Currant Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis* to a pheromone lure placed in Bob's patch of Blackcurrant bushes on 28 June 2001 and I beat a few moth larvae from local hedgerows. John has now been able to add spots to the county distribution maps for all these species but any Bordered Gothic have alluded me if they are there!

In 2002 I found a large amount of a double-flowered cultivar of Soapwort growing wild along the railway line by the level crossing on Foxcovert Road, Werrington (TF 163051), only 4.5 km from Borough Fen Decoy and I suspect this might be as suitable a foodplant as the native form. This colony is flagged up for a search in 2004. I have seen this same cultivar growing wild several times before, including by a telephone box in the village of Etton in 2003, and wonder if it is more widespread in the area, as a garden escape.

On 5 August 2003, with Mick Beeson, I tried searching Soapwort for Bordered Gothic larvae by night, at the colony on the roadside verge near Helpston, soon after dark, having set up an actinic trap at dusk in Oxey Wood. Neither of us have ever found the larva before. We just had the photograph in "Porter" to go on. Several adult Silver Y *Autographa gamma* were noted visiting the pinkish white Soapwort flowers for nectar and some photographs were taken to record the site. We found no larvae of

any species feeding on the Soapwort, though a few of the leaves did show some feeding damage.

These few special efforts have so far failed to locate the Bordered Gothic but I shall keep trying, as spare time allows, meanwhile hoping that one day I shall capture the moth incidentally during light-trapping for other purposes. Hopefully, a special BENHS field meeting that I am proposing for 2004, at Barnham Cross Common, in Norfolk, where Dudley (2003) reports finding the moth during the 1990s, will be more productive. Meanwhile, I wish others who are searching for this moth better luck than I have had so far, but I have enjoyed the hunt!

I would like to thank Bob Shirtcliffe and Mick Beeson for their help with the fieldwork and Writtle College, Essex, for their support in preparing this report.— PAUL WARING, Reader, Writtle College. Address for correspondence: Windmill View, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6LS (e-mail: paul_waring@btinternet.com).

Records of *Ceutorhynchus syrites* Germar (Col.: Curculionidae): a suggestion and a plea for information

Mr. A. A. Allen (2000, *Ent. Rec.* **112**: 211-3) has drawn attention to the account of Coleoptera in the *Victoria History of the County of Cornwall* (1906, Clark, J. in Page, W.) (*VCH*) as a source of records from the county, including *C. syrites*, which, as he states, is a 'very rare species with us'. He goes on to opine that the record in *A review of the scarce and threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain, part I* (Hyman, P. S. & Parsons, M. S., 1992) 'can hardly refer to Lamb's find' (at Padstow, in the *VCH* account). Could this not be a case of confusion between the use of a term in its general and specialised sense, similar to that of 'notable', on which the Editor has ruled (2001, *Ent. Rec.* **113**: 83)? The Cornish town of Padstow, though hardly to be thought of as in 'West Cornwall', is actually situated within the vice-county of that name (Dandy, J. E. 1969, *Watsonian Vice-Counties of Great Britain*). Vice-counties (Allen's 'county divisions') were used in the Review to summarise distributions. Hyman & Parsons (*op. cit.*) state of *C. syrites* in Britain 'Last recorded in 1966 from Aston Rowant, Oxfordshire'. The source of this record is quite unknown to me and enquiries of individuals and organisations likely to have information about it have failed to locate it. As all other published records of the weevil are nineteenth century ones this putative Aston Rowant occurrence is of considerable interest and importance. Can any reader of the *Record* help?— M. G. MORRIS, Orchard House, 7 Clarence Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2HF (E-mail: mgmorris.ent@virgin.net).

The Pale Pinion: *Lithophane hepatica* Clerk (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Norfolk

A singleton of this species was taken in a Rothamsted Insect Survey light-trap at Wells-next-the-Sea (trap number 274, O.S.grid reference TF 917434) on the night of 5/6 October 2002. This species is most often found in wooded areas of the south-west of the country, Wales and western Ireland, so its occurrence in East Anglia is most unusual. I am informed by Gerry Haggett of the Norfolk Moth Group that this is the